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Top Ten List of Ways to Avoid Violating the Alabama Ethics Law

by Jim Sumner

1. Don't take anything from anybody in exchange for official action. (Section 36-25-7, Code of Alabama 1975)
2. File your Statement of Economic Interests with the Ethics Commission by April 30th each year. (Section 36-25-14)
3. Don't use your position for your personal gain or to benefit a member of your family or a business with which you are associated. (Section 36-25-5(a))
4. Don't use public equipment, facilities, time, materials, human labor, or other public property for your personal gain or to benefit a member of your family or your business. (Section 36-25-5(c))
5. File copies of any contract you may have or enter into with a public entity (at any level of government) with the Ethics Commission within ten (10) days of the contract being entered into. Remember that all contracts, except those for professional services must be competitively bid. (Section 36-25-11)
6. Be sure you know what is an allowed gift under the law. (Section 36-25-1(31)(b)(2))
7. Understand what can be provided for you and your family in terms of hospitality, transportation, lodging, food and beverages, tickets to sporting and entertainment events as part of a social occasion, educational or informational program, etc. (Section 36-25-1(31)(b)(3-5))
8. Realize that honorariums are forbidden by the Ethics Law. (Section 36-25-1(31)(a))
9. Understand that contributions to your campaign fund or your inaugural or transitional fund may not be converted to personal use. (Section 36-25-6)
10. Know that you cannot solicit any thing for any purpose or any entity from a lobbyist, except a campaign contribution (Section 36-25-23(b))

**The Alabama Ethics Law and All Advisory Opinions
of the Ethics Commission can be viewed at our Web Site:
www.ethics.alabama.gov**